



General Assembly

January Session, 2001

***Raised Bill No. 6657***

LCO No. 3490

Referred to Committee on Judiciary

Introduced by:  
(JUD)

***AN ACT PROHIBITING EMPLOYMENT EXPLOITATION OF  
IMMIGRANT LABOR.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 31-4 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof:

3 The commissioner [may appoint, as special agents of the bureau,  
4 competent persons, familiar with the language of alien laborers, who  
5 shall inform such laborers, either personally or through printed matter  
6 in their language, as to their right of contract] shall provide immigrant  
7 laborers with printed material describing their rights as employees  
8 under the laws of the state, and shall prevent illegal advantage being  
9 taken of such laborers by reason of their [ignorance] lack of  
10 information about their rights, credulity or want of knowledge of the  
11 English language. [The appointment of such agents shall not be  
12 permanent but simply to meet the exigencies of each case as presented  
13 to the commissioner, and they shall be paid the same compensation as  
14 is paid other agents of the bureau. The total expense incurred in any  
15 one year under the provisions of this section shall not exceed three  
16 hundred dollars. Any person who obtains or receives money due

17 laborers ignorant of the English language and retains any part thereof  
18 for his own use without giving adequate consideration therefor shall  
19 be fined not more than one hundred dollars or imprisoned not more  
20 than one year or both.] The languages used in such printed material, in  
21 addition to Spanish and French, shall be those determined by the  
22 commissioner to be spoken by the primary groups of immigrant  
23 laborers in the state.

24 Sec. 2. Section 31-69a of the general statutes is repealed and the  
25 following is substituted in lieu thereof:

26 In addition to the penalties provided in part III of chapter 557, this  
27 chapter and chapter 568, any employer, officer, agent or other person  
28 who violates any provision of part III of chapter 557, this chapter or  
29 subsection (g) of section 31-288, shall be liable to the Labor Department  
30 for a civil penalty of three hundred dollars for each violation of said  
31 chapters and for each violation of subsection (g) of section 31-288. In  
32 addition to any such civil penalty, any employer, officer, agent or other  
33 person who knew or should have known that the employee who was a  
34 subject of the offense was an immigrant laborer or lacked knowledge  
35 of the English language, shall be liable for a civil penalty of one  
36 hundred fifty dollars for each violation, resulting in a maximum civil  
37 penalty of four hundred fifty dollars for each violation. The Attorney  
38 General, upon complaint of the Labor Commissioner, shall institute a  
39 civil action to recover such civil penalty. Any amount recovered shall  
40 be deposited in the General Fund and credited to a separate  
41 nonlapsing appropriation to the Labor Department, for other current  
42 expenses, and may be used by the Labor Department to enforce the  
43 provisions of part III of chapter 557, this chapter and subsection (g) of  
44 section 31-288 and to implement the provisions of section 31-4, as  
45 amended by this act.

46 Sec. 3. (NEW) (a) Any employer officer, agent or other person  
47 authorized to pay wages is guilty of defrauding immigrant labor when  
48 such person violates section 31-53 of the general statutes or any

49 provision of chapter 558 of the general statutes and such person knew  
50 or should have known that the employee who was a victim of the  
51 offense was an immigrant laborer or lacked knowledge of the English  
52 language.

53 (b) Defrauding immigrant labor is a class D felony.

***Statement of Purpose:***

To educate immigrant labor concerning their employment rights in this state and sanction employers with additional civil and criminal penalties for targeting immigrant workers with violations of wage and hour laws.

*[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]*